

# Community Letter in Support of Nonpartisanship

UPDATED September 5, 2017

The Honorable John Sarbanes  
2444 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Sarbanes:

The undersigned organizations strongly oppose proposals that would politicize the charitable nonprofit and philanthropic community by repealing or weakening current federal tax law protections that prohibit 501(c)(3) organizations from endorsing, opposing, or contributing to political candidates.

Nonpartisanship is a cornerstone principle that has strengthened the public's trust of the charitable community. In exchange for enjoying tax-exempt status and the ability to receive tax-deductible contributions, 501(c)(3) organizations – charitable nonprofits, including religious congregations, and foundations – agree to not engage in “any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.”

That provision of law protects the integrity and independence of charitable nonprofits and foundations. It shields the entire 501(c)(3) community against the rancor of partisan politics so the charitable community can be a safe haven where individuals of all beliefs come together to solve community problems free from partisan divisions. It screens out doubts and suspicions regarding ulterior partisan motives of charitable organizations, as undoubtedly would occur if even just a few charitable organizations engaged in partisan politics. Nonpartisan credibility is critical to the ability of 501(c)(3) organizations to work with elected officials of all parties at the local, state, and federal levels to address community needs.

Charitable nonprofits, including religious congregations, are free to speak on important matters of the day and advocate on public policy issues and legislation. Private foundations, while barred from most lobbying activities, are free to engage in public debates, promote public education efforts, and fund a wide range of issue-focused activities. The relevant language in Section 501(c)(3) merely prohibits partisan campaign intervention, defined to include endorsing or opposing candidates for public office, publishing or distributing statements for or against candidates, or using tax-deductible and other resources to support partisan campaign activities.

We are united in opposing any and all efforts to weaken or repeal this longstanding protection in the federal tax code (sometimes called the Johnson Amendment) that President Eisenhower signed into law in 1954. Weakening the law by allowing leaders of individual 501(c)(3) entities to endorse candidates for public office and engage in some partisan electioneering activities would damage the integrity and effectiveness of all charitable organizations and spawn litigation as innovative partisans seek to expand gray areas in the proposed legislation. Repealing the Johnson Amendment, an approach promoted by the President and some in Congress, would damage the federal Treasury as people take tax deductions for political contributions they could then funnel through charitable nonprofits, undercut fair elections by providing a loophole to avoid campaign contribution disclosure laws, and empower politicians to exert pressure for access to foundation assets and charitable funds for their own partisan campaigns rather than for the public good.

We urge you to join us in opposing efforts to weaken and/or repeal the current law that for six decades has successfully protected the integrity and effectiveness of charitable nonprofits and foundations by keeping them apart from partisan politics.

Respectfully,

<b>Maryland</b>			
AAHC, Inc.	Silver Spring	Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) - Prince George's County	Riverdale
Accessible Resources for Independence	Glen Burnie	Crossroads Community, Inc.	Centreville
Accounting for Change	Annapolis	Deaf Independent Living Association, Inc.	Salisbury
Alice Ferguson Foundation	Accokeek	Disability Rights Maryland	Baltimore
American Association of Anatomists		Electric Vehicle Association of Greater Washington, DC	Jefferson
American Association of Physics Teachers	College Park	Elijah's Blessing Community Service Center	Baltimore
American Physiological Society		Farr Commercial Federated Charities Corporation of Frederick	Frederick
American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.	Bethesda	First & St. Stephen's United Church of Christ	Baltimore
Annapolis Green	Annapolis	Frederick County 4-H Camp & Activities Center, Inc.	Frederick
Anne Arundel County Volunteer Center	Annapolis	Fundraising Consulting	Baltimore
Annie E. Casey Foundation	Baltimore	Girl Scouts of Central Maryland	Baltimore
Arundel Child Care Connections	Annapolis	Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay	Salisbury
Asian-American Homeownership Counseling, Inc.	Rockville	Glorystar Children's Chorus	
Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals	Baltimore	Goodwill Industries International, Inc.	Rockville
Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers		Hanberry Associates, LLC	Frederick
Association of Community Services	Columbia	Handicap International Harbel Community Organization, Inc.	Silver Spring
Association of Immunization Managers	Rockville	Healthy Howard, Inc.	Baltimore
Autism FYI Org	Bowie	Heritage Housing Partners Corporation	Laurel
Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc.	Baltimore	Hero Dogs, Inc.	Columbia
Baltimore Research	Baltimore	Historic Sotterley, Inc.	Clarksville
BioQUEST		Holton-Arms School	Hollywood
CALMRA, Inc.	Beltsville	HopeWorks of Howard County	Bethesda
CASA of the Mid-Shore		Human Resource Learning Center	Columbia
Celebrate Frederick, Inc.	Frederick	Humanim	
Charles County Charitable Trust	La Plata	Inspiring Change Mental Health Services	Columbia
Christine L Manor, CPA	Rockville	Intersection of Change	Baltimore
Community Foundation of Anne Arundel County	Annapolis	It Takes Two, Inc.	Baltimore
Consumer Health First	Potomac		Crofton

Jesus for All Evangelistic Ministry, Inc.	Gaithersburg	S.A.F.E. - Supplying Allergy Friendly and Emergency - Food Pantry	Columbia
Ladies Auxiliary of the Ocean City Volunteer Fire Co.	Ocean City	Service Coordination, Inc.	Frederick
Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services, Inc.	Laurel	Shepherds of Zion Ministries International Church	Silver Spring
Laurel-Beltsville Oasis, Inc.	Laurel	Side by Side	Laurel
Leaders of Tomorrow Youth Center, Inc.		SONA Consulting, Inc.	Baltimore
Lighthouse - Youth and Family Services	Catonsville	Strong City Baltimore	Baltimore
Linda Felder House of Etiquette, Inc.	Baltimore	Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority, Inc.	Takoma Park
Living In Recovery	Columbia	The Arc Baltimore	Baltimore
Marc Breslaw & Associates LLC		The Arc Maryland	
Maryland Association of Youth Service Bureaus	Greenbelt	The Bainum Family Foundation	Bethesda
Maryland CASH Campaign		The Nora Roberts Foundation	
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault		The Sheridan Group	Silver Spring
Maryland Humanities	Baltimore	The Sober Truth Substance Abuse Treatment	Westminster
Maryland Nonprofits	Baltimore	The Village In Howard, Inc.	Columbia
Meier and Associates		Total Care Services, Inc.	Lanham
Mental Health Association of Frederick County	Frederick	Tri-County Youth Services Bureau	Waldorf
Metro Maryland Ostomy Association	Rockville	United Ministries, Inc.	Baltimore
Miracle Ministry	Rockville	United Way of Frederick County	Frederick
Mission of Love Charities, Inc.	Capitol Heights	United Way of Washington County, MD	Hagerstown
Montgomery County Agricultural Center, Inc. (Montgomery County Fair)	Gaithersburg	US Lacrosse	
Moveable Feast, Inc.	Baltimore	Vega Mala Consulting	Rockville
National 4-H Council	Chevy Chase	V-LINC	Baltimore
National Dance Education Organization		Volunteers of America Chesapeake, Inc.	Lanham
Networks of Change	Perryville	White Rose Farm Circle, Inc.	Taneytown
Nonprofit Village	Rockville		
One Bright Bird Consulting, LLC	Adamstown		
Pathfinders for Autism	Hunt Valley		
Paul's Place	Baltimore		
Payroll Network	Baltimore		
Project Change	Olney		
Public Justice Center	Baltimore		
Rebuilding Together	Queenstown		
Redstart Creative	Towson		
Redtop FC, Inc.			

**National Organizations**

Abila  
 Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education, Inc.  
 AdoptAClassroom.org  
 Alliance for Strong Families and Communities  
 Alfred P. Sloan Foundation  
 America Solidaria U.S.  
 American Alliance of Museums  
 American Association of Anatomists  
 American Association of Physics Teachers  
 American Association of Teachers of German  
 American Atheists  
 American Bladder Cancer Society

American Board of Venous & Lymphatic  
Medicine  
American Brass Chamber Music Association  
American Conference of Academic Deans  
American Heart Association  
American Historical Association  
American Jewish Committee  
American Medical Association Foundation  
American Physiological Society  
American Podiatric Medical Association, Inc.  
American Red Cross  
Americans for the Arts  
Americans Promoting Study Abroad  
Americans United for Separation of Church  
and State  
Amyloidosis Foundation  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Annie E. Casey Foundation  
Anti-Defamation League  
Asian Pacific American Legal Resource  
Center  
Association for Jewish Outreach  
Professionals  
Association of American Colleges and  
Universities  
Association of Art Museum Directors  
Association of Direct Response Fundraising  
Counsel  
Association of Fundraising Professionals  
Association of Immunization Managers  
Association of Nature Center Administrators  
Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice  
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty  
Baptist Women in Ministry  
Barr Foundation  
BoardSource  
Brady Campaign and Center to Prevent Gun  
Violence  
Camp Fire  
Campion Foundation  
Catholic Charities USA  
Catholic Mobilizing Network  
Center for Health, Environment & Justice  
Center for Inquiry  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Citizen Schools  
CleanSlateNow  
Commonwealth Fund  
Council on Foundations  
Council for Global Equality  
Dance USA  
Dementia Society, Inc.  
Democracy 21  
Destination & Travel Foundation  
Dietel Partners, LLC  
Disability Rights Advocacy Fund  
Easter Seals  
Ecology Project International  
Engineering Conferences International  
Episcopal Relief & Development  
Feed the Children  
Feeding America  
Fidesco USA  
Food & Water Watch  
Ford Foundation  
Free Press  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
Girls Inc.  
Global Integrity  
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.  
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations  
Greater Nonprofits  
GuideStar  
Habitat for Humanity International  
Harbor Compliance  
HawkWatch International  
Hindu American Foundation  
Histiocytosis Foundation  
Horizons National  
Human Science Institute  
Independent Sector  
International Essential Tremor Foundation  
International Hearing Dog, Inc.  
International Performing Arts for Youth  
International Primate Protection League  
Issue One  
Jessie Ball DuPont Fund  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Federations of North America  
Leadership USA  
League of American Orchestras  
League of Women Voters  
Leukemia Research Foundation  
Local Learning: The National Network for Folk  
Arts in Education  
Lumina Foundation  
Lymphoma Foundation of America  
Migraine Research Foundation  
Mentors International  
Morino Ventures, LLC  
National 4-H Council  
National Alliance of Community Economic  
Development

National Association of Charitable Gift Planners  
National Association of Health Data Organizations  
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA)  
National Association of Watch and Collectors  
National Association for Shoplifting Prevention  
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Center for Appropriate Technology  
National Center for Fire and Life Safety  
National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome  
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy  
National Council of Behavioral Health  
National Council of Churches  
National Council of Nonprofits  
National Council of Tribes  
National Dance Education Organization  
National Hartford Centers of Gerontological Nursing Excellence  
National Human Services Assembly  
National Indian Child Welfare Association  
National LGBTQ Task Force  
National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation  
National Runaway Safeline  
National Safe Place Network  
National Tongan American Society  
NEO Law Group  
North American Bramble Growers Research Foundation  
OPERA America  
Partnership for America's Children  
Pension Fund of the Christian Church  
Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement  
Project Wet Foundation  
Project Managers Without Borders  
Public Citizen  
Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
Secular Coalition for America  
Senior Executives Association  
Seva Foundation  
Skillman Foundation  
Silicon Valley Community Foundation  
Smith's Food and Drug  
Social Velocity  
The Arc of the United States  
The Aspen Institute  
The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc.  
The Commonwealth Fund  
The Dibble Institute  
The Educational Foundation of America  
The George Gund Foundation  
The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation  
The Ocean Foundation  
The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation  
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society  
The Voter Participation Center  
TIDES  
Unemployment Services Trust  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Philanthropy Forum  
United Way Worldwide  
University Professional & Continuing Education Association  
US Lacrosse  
Vasculitis Foundation  
Volunteers in Medicine  
Volunteers of America  
Voto Latino  
Wallace Global Fund  
WasteWater Education  
Weingart Foundation  
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
Words Without Borders  
World Day of Prayer USA  
World Neighbors, Inc.  
Youth Services America  
YWCA USA